

before the peace of their own country and of Europe are gone, and more peaceful men have taken their place. I gladly recognize that France is more pacific and less explosive than last year. Yet the danger of coalitions is permanent, and we must arrange once for all to meet it. We must make greater exertions than other nations on account of our position.

Russia and France can only be attacked on one front, but God has placed us beside the most bellicose and restless of nations, the French, and He has allowed bellicose tendencies to grow up in Russia. I do not expect an early breach of the peace, but I advise other countries to discontinue their menaces. We Germans fear God and nothing else in the world." It was the swan song of the old Chancellor in the sphere of foreign affairs.

IV

The fall of Bismarck in 1890 was hailed with delight in France. He had helped to keep the peace, commented the French Ambassador, but in every situation his first thought was to counterwork French interests. His marvellous skill, his immense authority on all the Cabinets, his influence on the press, enabled him to keep France in isolation. The new Chancellor, whatever his ill will, could not do her so much harm. A slight *detente* began when the French Government accepted the invitation of William II to send a delegate to an International Conference on social reform at Berlin. The veteran statesman and publicist Jules Simon, who was chosen for the task, was captivated by the charm, the frankness and the energy of his host. The Kaiser expressed his ardent desire to enter into cordial relations with France, and when his visitor replied that the question could not be solved at present, he rejoined that it was never too soon to formulate

a good idea.
"Your army has made great progress and is ready," he added ;
"if it were engaged in single combat with the German army
no one could forecast the result of the struggle.
Therefore I
should regard as a madman or a criminal
whoever stirred up
the two peoples to make war." Jules Simon had
no more
doubt of the speaker's absolute sincerity than of
the purity of
his French accent. His accession had been
dreaded in Paris, for
his admiration for the army and its glorious
traditions was
notorious, and it was widely held that he was
likely to prove the
enfant terrible of Europe- The diminution of
tension was